

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

May 28, 2010

The Honorable Ken Salazar
Secretary
Department of Interior
1849 C Street
Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Secretary Salazar:

We are writing to request that you expedite the Department of the Interior's review of soda ash royalties required by the Soda Ash Royalty Reduction Act.

The American natural soda ash industry is important to each of our states employing over three thousand people in its production in Wyoming and California, and another one hundred dockworkers in Portland, Oregon where it represents the second largest export. Soda ash is critical to glass manufacturing, including fiberglass for insulation and flat glass for the housing, commercial building, and automotive industries. Soda ash is also used in air pollution control technology for removing sulfur dioxide and other pollutants.

In October 2006, Congress enacted the Soda Ash Royalty Reduction Act to reduce the federal government's then 6% per ton royalty on U.S. soda ash to 2%. The Congress enacted this measure to, in part, enable our domestic soda ash industry to compete effectively against global producers.

The Act also called on the Department to conduct an analysis of the impact this reduction has had on the volume of U.S. soda ash produced, the number of jobs created, and the royalties paid to the Treasury; we request that the Department immediately proceed to assemble the data necessary for the assessment required by the Act and urge you to complete action as soon after the initial October 12, 2010 reporting date as possible. We also request that you consider making a preliminary analysis of these impacts prior to October 12, 2010 so that Congress has the necessary information upon which to consider the extension of royalty relief as soon as possible.

Based on information the industry has provided to us, it would appear that the royalty reduction has achieved the impact Congress intended, stimulating capital investment and job creation while not diminishing much-needed Treasury revenues. The Department should undertake its own evaluation in an expedited manner in order that we might consider extension of this measure and provide certainty to producers and maintain the jobs this important industry provides. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Ron Wyden
United States Senator



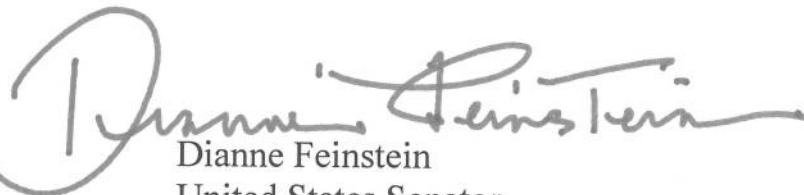
John Barrasso
United States Senator



Michael B. Enzi
United States Senator



Jeff Merkley
United States Senator



Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator